

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

To: Leisure and Development Committee

Rural Development Programme Update

9th June 2015

For Information

Report to Committee

Linkage to Interim Corporate Plan	
Strategic Themes	Transition and Transformation Prosperity Health & Wellbeing Cohesive Community
Lead Officer	Richard Baker - Director of Leisure & Development Suzanne Irwin – RDP Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	n/a

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the Rural Development Programme (2014-2020) for the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.

Background

At its Annual Meeting, Causeway Coast and Glens District Council confirmed the nomination of the 8 elected members onto the Local Action Group (LAG). The process of appointing social partners on to the LAG has also been completed and the Local Action Group (LAG) for the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council met on 1st April 2015 with 18 members having been appointed. The membership breakdown complies with the EU Common Provisions Regulation which stipulates among other things that 'no one single interest group shall represent more than 49% of the voting rights'. This means public sector representatives (considered as a single group) must not exceed 49% of the makeup of the LAG Board.

The Department for Rural Development (DARD) is still waiting for formal approval of the draft Programme from the European Commission. The overall allocation to the Causeway Coast & Glens Council area is, at £9.6million, the third highest of the ten areas. Up to 22% of the overall budget can be used for administration which means there is a programme budget of £7.78m and a technical assistance budget of £1.73m available for up to a six year period.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will be responsible for providing administrative and advisory services to the Local Action Group (LAG) for the delivery of the new Rural Development Programme for the period 2014-2020. In January the Council agreed to submit an application to the Department for Rural Development (DARD) for funds to enable the Council to appoint staff to facilitate the LAG.

Update

Administrative Support

From 1st May 2015, an Animation Contract of up to £50,000 has been available from DARD for Council to recruit staff to start the Animation of the Programme and the development of the Strategy. DARD are currently working through the process and will shortly be issuing a Service Level Agreement to Causeway Coast & Glens Council. The purpose of this Service Level Agreement is to formalise an arrangement between DARD and the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council to deliver administrative and advisory support services to the LAG during the

period prior to the LAG formally contracting with DARD at Programme approval stage. Mrs Suzanne Irwin has been appointed by the Council as the Rural Development Programme Manager.

Local Action Group

The LAG held its first two meetings on 1st and 30th April 2015 with the third meeting scheduled for Thursday 28th May 2015.

As a result of these meetings:

- Patsy Bradley has been nominated as the Interim Chair of the LAG,
- A number of LAG members attended the Balmoral Show to represent the Causeway Coast and Glens area in the LEADER marquee,
- A meeting schedule for the next year has been agreed,
- A Governance sub-group met to consider the draft Memorandum and Articles of Association for the LAG,
- The Causeway Coast and Glens LAG was one of three LAGS that had to submit a Gender Action Plan to support the LAG application because female representation is less than the anticipated 28%.

The first compulsory capacity building and training session for local LAG members is scheduled for Tuesday 9th June 2015 and will be facilitated by the Rural Development Council.

DARD

The Department is continuing work on the range of templates for the Local Action Groups. These include templates for the Interim Strategy, the Application form and the Scoring documentation.

It is expected that the Department will score the Causeway Coast and Glens LAG application this week and that an appointment letter will follow (to commence when the Programme is formally agreed by the European Commission).